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DEF 19 US-JORDAN
XR AID 6 JORDAN

FOR RM USE ONLY
XR DEF 12-5 ISR

HANDLING INDICATOR
XR DEF 19 US-ISR

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

20

A-1025 NO.

UNCLASSIFIED

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE 1966 JUN 12 AM 8 04

INFO : AMMAN, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV

RM/AN
ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION
BRANCH

FROM : Amembassy BEIRUT DATE: June 7, 1966

SUBJECT : Lebanese Journalist Writes That US Military Aid to Jordan Motivated by Fear of Similar Soviet Aid

REF :

Beirut's English-language Daily Star of June 4 carried a front-page article by David Mizrahi, the paper's correspondent in the United States, to the effect that the United States decided to furnish military aid to Jordan out of a fear that the Soviet Union would offer such aid if the United States did not. "Reliable US informants" were quoted as being the source of this information. The text of the article follows:

"Fears that Jordan might attempt to buy Soviet military hardware had prompted US arms deliveries to this Middle Eastern country, reliable US informants have said.

"The US State Department has not yet revealed details about its deliveries of military equipment to either Israel or Jordan, but the same informants had the following information to divulge on the story of US arms deals with the two countries.

"They said that after the first Arab summit conference King Hussein had visited the US and told officials here that he had authority to use fund of the Unified Arab Military Command to buy Soviet military equipment.

"This, the informants said, was to include T-54 medium tanks and MIG-21 supersonic jet fighters. Soviet equipment, they added, was much cheaper than what Jordan could obtain from the West.

"They explained that a MIG-21, for instance, would cost the Command only $600,000 a piece, or less than half what the Americans, British or French would charge for their planes.

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

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Drafted by: POL:DSMak:fm 6-6-66

Contents and Classification Approved by: DSMak

Clearances:

NEA NEA 4/13

"Fearing an expansion of Soviet influence in the Middle East, the sources said, Washington promised King Hussein, before his departure from the US, 100 reconditioned Patton tanks, armored vehicles and command cars.

"Two months later, the sources said, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol visited the US and left Washington with a gift of 200 Patton tanks to be delivered through West Germany.

"When Bonn cancelled the deal under Arab pressure last year, the tanks were delivered directly by the US, the sources added.

"At this juncture, according to the same sources, King Hussein made clear to the American ambassador in Amman that he was contemplating the purchase of Soviet tanks. One hundred more tanks were delivered to Jordan enabling this country to create a new armored brigade.

"The sources went on to say that King Hussein later asked for fighter planes and dickered with the British and French until Washington offered him 36 second hand Star fighters of the F-104 type which US manufacturers agreed to recondition. The delivery will be made in three instalments of one squadron each. Jordan has so far bought only one squadron paying 'full price' for it, the sources said.

"Having satisfied one of King Hussein's demands the sources added, the State and Defense Departments had to appease Israel. For more than 10 years, Israel has been buying planes from France. But what Israel now wanted from the US is a compensation for the sale of Star fighters to Jordan.

"The sources said that Washington had refused Israel's request on the grounds that it was established US policy to supply only defensive weapons to Middle Eastern countries to 'correct any imbalance created there.'

"Israel had to be content for the time being with Skyhawk light bombers that can carry a 5,000 lb. bomb or missile load at the relative low speed of 680 miles-per-hour with an overall combat range of 1,000 miles, the sources said."

PORTER